2004

Louisiana

Agricultural Statistics

Including a Historical Section

Compiled by
The Louisiana Field Office
of
The United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service

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The support and cooperation of Louisiana's farmers, ranchers and agribusinesses are the foundation for accurate and reliable agricultural statistics. The entire staff of the National Agricultural Statistics Service's Louisiana Field Office, along with the enumerators of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) who collect the data, would like to express our great appreciation to the many individuals and operations who provided the survey data to make this publication and the estimates it contains possible.

The 2004 Louisiana Agricultural Statistics bulletin provides a wealth of economic, crop, livestock and weather data for the state as a whole. Additionally, for major commodities, the bulletin provides 2004 parish level estimates.

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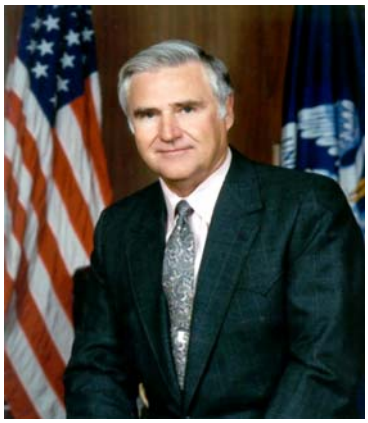

Message from Commissioner Odom

From colonial days through the present, the fertile land of the lower Mississippi River Valley has made Louisiana one of the richest agricultural regions in America. Louisiana has always been a major producer of cotton and sugarcane, but the state firmly entrenched its position as a preeminent world supplier of cotton when the mechanical cotton picker was perfected in 1936. In addition to cotton, the sugar industry was revolutionized when 20th century industrial implements for sugarcane planting, cutting and loading came into widespread use. Rice also became a major commercial crop in Louisiana by the late 19th century with the introduction of steam technology and irrigation techniques.

But Louisiana has become famous nationally and internationally for several of its native agricultural products which were developed in the 20th century. Louisiana nurserymen were the first to propagate superior pecan tree genotypes, and today the state is a leading producer of pecan nuts.

The Atchafalaya River Basin fishermen popularized the consumption of crawfish, and the state hosts thousands of acres of commercial crawfish ponds providing a significant source of income for agricultural interests. Alligator farm production supplies the international market with high quality exotic leather. Because of these grass root movements, Louisiana has become the nation’s largest producer of crawfish and alligator hides.

Progressive agricultural innovations have also allowed Louisiana citrus and vegetable growers to feed American consumers. But the most significant modern agricultural development in the state was the rise of forestry. With the economic impact from paper-making and lumber, the dollar value of forestry to the state’s economy is greater than all of the other agricultural endeavors combined.

Today, Louisiana remains one of the nation's largest producers of cotton, sugarcane, rice, sweet potatoes and pecans, and is also a major producer of soybeans and corn.

The numbers compiled within this historical publication reflect the hard work of Louisiana producers, and we thank them for their participation in surveys conducted by the Louisiana Statistics Office.

Sincerely,

Bob Odom

Bob Odom
Commissioner

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The USDA-National Agricultural Statistics Service, Louisiana Field Office publishes the Louisiana Agricultural Statistics bulletin through cooperative agreements between the USDA - National Agricultural Statistics Service's Louisiana Field Office, Louisiana Department of Agricultural and Forestry, Louisiana State University AgCenter and Southern University Extension. Enclosed in this publication is a complete statistical history for specific agricultural commodities in this state.

The Louisiana Field Office is a state office within the National Agricultural Statistics Service which is the agency charged with providing agricultural statistics for the United States Department of Agriculture. Agricultural Statistics has been a keen interest in America since the original colonies when President George Washington presented the first proposal for the establishment of a Federal agency devoted to agriculture. The Patent Office, established in 1836, carried out a substantial number of duties outlined in the first proposal for a Board of Agriculture even though the office was not authorized for these activities. On March 3, 1839, $1,000 was appropriated for "the collection of agricultural statistics and for other agricultural purposes". Appropriations were granted sporadically from 1839 until 1862. The Department of Agriculture was established by Abraham Lincoln in 1862. He called it "the people's department," and its first crop report appeared in July 1863. NASS traces its roots all the way back to 1863, when USDA established a Division of Statistics.

The USDA-NASS, Louisiana Field Office has been known by numerous different names such as the Crop and Livestock Reporting Service; Economics, Statistics, and Cooperative Service (ESCS), and Statistical Reporting Service (SRS). Even though we have been known by these names our primary mission has not changed and that is to provide unbiased statistical information to the agriculture and business communities. Data included in this publication represent numerous agricultural, economic and chemical use surveys completed by a multitude of Louisiana producers over the years. Without the cooperation of agricultural producers, agri-business and private industry these data series would not be possible.

We thank all Louisianans who have participated in the March, June, September, December Agricultural Survey, Monthly Crop Yield surveys, January and July Cattle surveys, Cotton Objective Yield survey, January Sheep and Goat Survey along with a number of other surveys conducted on an annual basis. We give special thanks to all producers cooperating on the Censuses of Agriculture and Aquaculture plus the Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey and Census of Horticulture.

Sincerely,

Nathan Crisp

Nathan L. Crisp

Director